

Please Remember

● Dogs must be kept on a leash when you visit the state recreation area, and in an enclosed tent or vehicle at night. An extra fee is charged for each dog brought into the unit.

● Fires are allowed only in grills; no ground fires are permitted. The area becomes tinder-dry in the summer, and high winds often add to the fire hazard.

*San Luis Reservoir
State Recreation Area
31426 West Highway 152
Santa Nella, CA 93635
209/826-1196*

Pete Wilson, Governor



Douglas P. Wheeler, Secretary for Resources
Donald W. Murphy, Director, Dept. Parks & Recreation



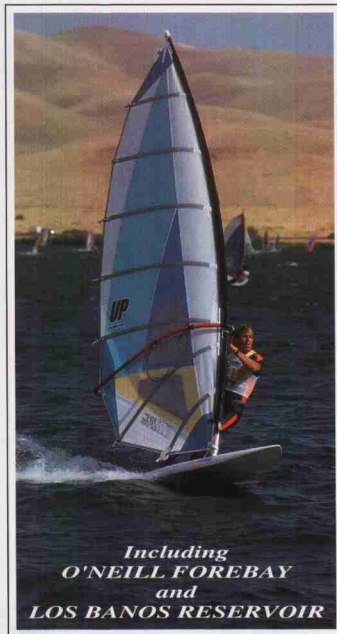
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Department of Parks & Recreation
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San Luis Reservoir

State Recreation Area



Nestled in the grassy hills of the western San Joaquin Valley near historic Pacheco Pass, San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area is noted for boating, board sailing, camping, and picnicking. But it's anglers who find the unit's three lakes most inviting.

San Luis Reservoir was constructed as a storage reservoir for the federal Central Valley Project and the California State Water Project. It stores runoff water from the Delta that would otherwise flow into the ocean. The water arrives through the California Aqueduct and the Delta-Mendota Canal, and is pumped from the O'Neill Forebay into the main reservoir during the winter and spring. The Los Banos Creek Reservoir was built to prevent storm runoff from flooding the canals.

A visitor center at the Romero Overlook provides full information on the reservoirs and water projects through audio-visual and printed materials. Telescopes are also available for viewing the area.

Summer temperatures here average in the mid-90s and occasionally exceed 100° but evenings are usually cool and pleasant. Rainfall averages eight to nine inches a year, mostly between November and April. In winter, temperatures seldom go below freezing, and tule fogs are frequent. In the spring, the golden-brown hills are coated with a fleeting green, highlighted by bursts of wildflower colors.

One section of the California Aqueduct Bikeway begins at the San Luis Creek area and heads toward the Bethany Reservoir near Livermore, 70 miles (110 KM.) to the north. The bikeway's rest stops are ten miles apart, and bicyclists can camp overnight in the Bethany picnic area (there are chemical toilets, but no piped water).

History

Long before the dams and canals were built, this land was the home of the Northern Valley Yokuts, Native Americans who harvested seeds, acorns, and the roots of the tules that grew in the marshes of the sluggish San Joaquin River. There were also fish, geese, and ducks for food, as well as huge herds of pronghorn antelope and tule elk on the plains. With the coming of the Spanish, though, this way of life disappeared. Many of the valley people were taken to missions around 1805, and an epidemic, possibly of malaria, decimated the human population of this area in 1833. In the 1850s, the survivors were killed or driven off by Euroamerican settlers.

Pacheco Pass was named for Don Juan Pacheco, who settled here in the 1840s. The pass was used by Native Americans, Spanish soldiers and missionaries, Mexican ranchers, and gold miners, as well as more recent travellers. In 1856, Andrew Firebaugh

improved the pass and made it a toll road, with a toll house two miles west of the summit. He had hardly finished when the Butterfield-Overland stages began using the road as part of their route from San Francisco to Missouri.

The first waterworks in the area were constructed in 1871, when farmers built a canal from the Mendota Dam to Los Banos Creek to irrigate their wheat crops. Many canals were added over the years, until they totalled 180 miles in length. Ground was broken in 1962 for the San Luis Project, which created the current reservoirs. Today, Los Banos area farmers cultivate alfalfa, grapes, tomatoes, melons, corn, cotton, beans, sugar beets, fruits, and nuts.

Camping and Picnicking

At the Basalt Area near the main reservoir, 79 developed family campsites are set in an open forest of eucalyptus and pine, planted when the state recreation area was built. Campsites include tables, cupboards, and barbecue grills. Drinking water and restrooms with solar-heated showers are nearby. Some of the sites can accommodate trailers and motorhomes up to 37-feet long, but there are no hookups. One wheelchair-accessible campsite is located near the restrooms, which can also accommodate wheelchairs. During the summer, rangers often lead interpretive programs at the campfire center on weekends.

At the Meadows Area at San Luis Creek, on the west shoreline of the O'Neill Forebay, there are 53 developed family campsites with electrical hookups and water. Motor homes and trailers up to 28-feet long are allowed. There is also a group campground and picnic area that will accommodate up to 100 people.

The family picnic area at San Luis Creek has two large shaded picnic areas with sandy beaches. At South Beach boaters are allowed to beach their boats. The North Beach area is designated for swimmers.

At the Medeiros Area, on the south shoreline of the O'Neill Forebay, up to five hundred campers can use the undeveloped area between Highways 33 and 152. Drinking water and chemical toilets are available. Camping is allowed between the shoreline and the road.

At the Los Banos Creek Reservoir, there are 20 undeveloped camping/picnicking sites that have shade ramadas, tables, and stoves scattered along the shore. Drinking water and chemical toilets are provided. A primitive camping area for equestrians is also available here; it has chemical toilets. Water for

campers is available at the park residence, and water for horses comes from dam seepage.

Reservations are recommended for spring and summer weekends and holiday stays in the Basalt Area. The Medeiros Area, the Meadows Area, and the Los Banos Creek campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis. You can make reservations by calling MISTIX at 1-800-444-7275. The group campground/picnic area at San Luis Creek can be reserved by calling 209-826-1196.

Wildlife and Hunting

Several kinds of animals are found at San Luis, including jackrabbits, cottontails, ground squirrels, raccoons, opossums, skunks, gray foxes, coyotes, bobcats, feral pigs, various kinds of snakes (including rattlesnakes) and deer. But most visitors probably see more of the area's birdlife. The state recreation area is a good place to watch for golden eagles, (in the winter) and you may see several other birds of prey — hawks, owls, white-tailed kites, and occasionally bald eagles. Waterfowl include migratory geese and ten species of ducks, as well as many other waterbirds.

Migratory waterfowl hunting is allowed only on certain parts of the Los Banos Creek Reservoir, the San Luis Reservoir, and the O'Neill Forebay. No hunting is permitted within 300 feet of campgrounds, picnic areas, boat ramp areas, or dike and water structures (see map). Hunting is allowed daily in season, from 1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset. Handguns and rifles are not permitted for waterfowl hunting, and federal and state game laws apply.

Fishing

The San Luis Reservoir and the O'Neill Forebay are well known for their world record-size striped bass. Fish caught here also include largemouth black bass, catfish, crappies, bluegill, shad, perch, and sometimes salmon and sturgeon. These fish are born in the Delta; they travel south through the aqueduct, and grow to good sizes in the fertile waters of the San Luis Reservoir (14,000 acres) and the O'Neill Forebay (2,000 acres). The Los Banos Reservoir (620 acres) has been planted with crappies, bluegill, largemouth bass, catfish, and trout. On the San Luis Reservoir and the O'Neill Forebay, striped bass can be caught throughout the year. Experts suggest trolling with lures in the fall through early spring, and fishing with anchovies or shad and live minnows the rest of the year.

Largemouth bass and trout fishing is good on the Los Banos Reservoir in the early winter through spring, and bluegill and crappie fishing is good from spring through early winter.

Check current State Department of Fish and Game regulations for size limits and other rules. Anglers 16 years of age and older must have a California fishing license.

Boating and Waterskiing

Boats are allowed on the San Luis Reservoir and the O'Neill Forebay from 1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset, and on the Los Banos Reservoir from 1/2 hour before sunrise until 1/2 hour past sunset. There is a 5 mph speed limit on Los Banos Reservoir. Boats must carry a life jacket for each passenger; rangers will check to make sure that engine noise is below permissible levels.

The boating pattern is counter-clockwise on O'Neill Forebay and is strictly enforced.

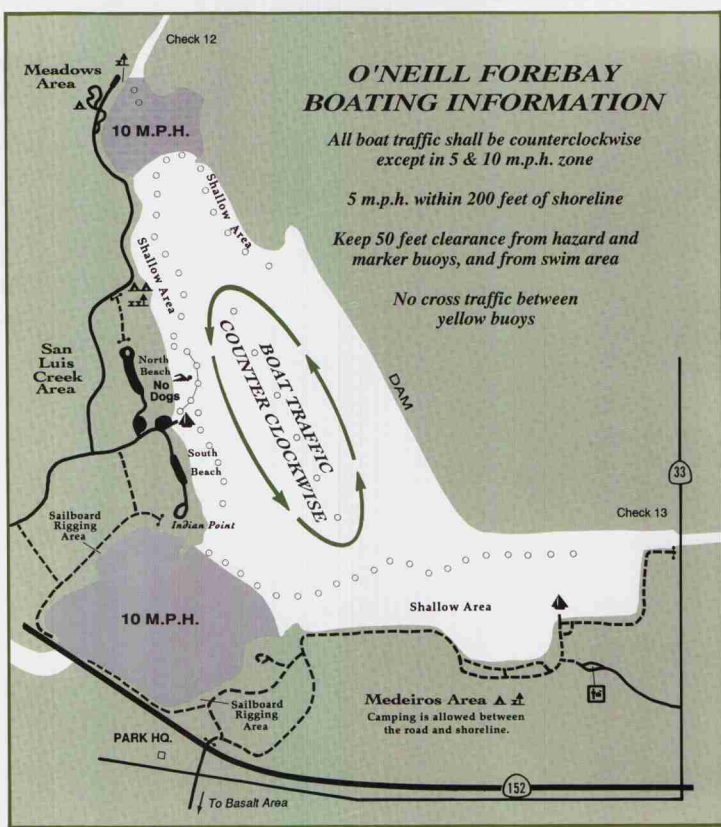
Strong spring and summer west winds make O'Neill Forebay nationally known for its excellent board sailing. The area of the forebay marked "no ski" is often the preferred area for this sport.

Boating safety notes for San Luis Reservoir SRA:

Wind — The area is often windy, and winds can come up quite suddenly. Watch the warning lights at the Romero Overlook, Basalt, Quien Sabe Point, and Tunnel Island on the main reservoir. On the forebay, wind warning lights are located at the Medeiros Boat Ramp and above the South Beach Picnic Area of San Luis Creek. The lights flash yellow when the winds reach 15 miles per hour, and red — GET OFF THE WATER! — when the winds go over 30 MPH.

Drawdown — San Luis is a storage reservoir. The lake level drops throughout the summer as water is used for irrigation. As the level drops, new islands are uncovered, and formerly deep areas become shallow and hazardous. Also, watch out for hazards connected with the inlet works in the main reservoir, and the inlet and outlet channels of the forebay.

Speed Limits — The maximum speed is 5 miles per hour on the Los Banos Reservoir, and near all boat ramps and shorelines. There are also 10 MPH zones on both the main reservoir and the O'Neill Forebay (see map).



Upper Cottonwood Creek
Wildlife Area

San Luis Reservoir
Wildlife Area

No hunting within 300 feet of shoreline.

All-night fishing allowed from bank except at developed picnic areas of San Luis Creek. This area closes at 10 p.m.

Lake open to boating from 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset.

NOTE: The Lake may be closed at any time due to high winds.

California
Aqueduct Bikeway

Lower Cottonwood Creek
Wildlife Area

Santa Nella

Henry Miller Ave.

Volta

Closed to Public

O'Neill Forebay
Wildlife Area

ENTRANCE

Medeiros Area

Gonzaga Rd.	
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California Division
of Forestry

Jasper Sears Rd.

San Luis Reservoir

Quien Sabe Point

Basalt Day Use Area open to all vehicles from sunrise to sunset.

Portuguese
Creek Area

Los Banos Creek Reservoir

Employee Residence

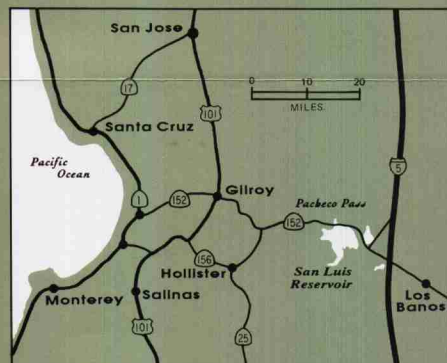
North Rim Drive

A hand-drawn map of the area around Horse Camp. It shows a road with a dashed line, a river, and several landmarks. A large 'X' is marked on the road, and a small square is marked on the river. The text 'DAM' is written near the river, and 'Horse Camp' is written at the bottom right.

South Rim Drive

Lake open to boating from 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset.

5 m.p.h. speed limit on reservoir.



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|---|---|
|  | PAVED ROADS |
|  | UNPAVED ROADS |
|  | TRAILS |
|  | PICNIC AREAS |
|  | GROUP PICNIC AREAS |
|  | CAMPGROUND |
|  | GROUP CAMPGROUND |
|  | SWIMMING AREA |
|  | NO SKI AREA (10 m.p.h.) |
|  | BOAT LAUNCH RAMPS |
|  | WIND WARNING LIGHTS |
|  | LOCKED GATES |
|  | ENTRANCE STATION |
|  | NO HUNTING WITHIN
300 FT. OF SHORELINE |

